Committee was fixed at 25,000. In addition, about 15000 Indians went for Haj on their own.

(d) and (e) Families of those killed in the stampede have been contacted in India through Central Haj Committee in order to asscertain the assistance required. Consulate General of India, Jeddah has contacted relatives of the deceased in Saudi Arabia to offer any help that they may need. Such assistance includes arrangements for their return journey to India, transportation to Madinah and facilities to contact their families in India. Members of the Indian Haj Medical Mission have been asked to pay special attention to those who sustained injuries in the stamapede.

Discriminatory Policy in Gulf Countries

7690. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of Government has been drawn to a Press news-item captioned "Descrimination against Gulf emigrants alleged" as reported in the "Statesman" dated 16th May, 1994;

(b) if so, whether discriminatory policy is being adopted by the Government towards emigrant workers in the Gulf countries;

(c) if so, whether the Indian Mission in the Gulf countries and in the industrial countries are not even helping the Indians there; and

(d) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R.L. BHATIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The discrimination alleged in the news item pertains to banking matters. The Information is being collected and will be placed on the Table of the House.

(c) and (d) Indian Missions in all countries assist Indian nationals on an on-going basis.

Democratic Rights of the Indian Nespapers in Foreign Countries

7691. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of Government has been drawn to a Press news-item captioned "Pak embassy sues Indian Newspapers" as reported in the "Statesman" dated 18th May, 1994;

(b) if so, the facts thereof;

(c) whether Government have taken any action in this regard;

(d) whether the democratic rights of the Indian Newspapers in foreign countries are being snatched; and

(e) if so, the further reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R.L. BHATIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Pakistan Embassy in Washington has reportedly initiated legal action against a weekly newspaper "Express India", published from Washington D.C. which caters mainly to the Indian community. This followed publication of a despatch in "Express India" of April 15th, 1994, about 'internal problems' at the Pakistan Embassy in Washington.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) "Express India" newspaper is published in the USA. It is not an Indian newspaper. Therefore, there is no question of any infringement of the rights of any Indian newspaper.

(e) In view of answer to (d) above, this incident is not an occasion for the Government to take any action or to react in any manner.